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# Vicovaro (city)

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**Vicovaro** is a city in the southern part of the [Old Continent](#) and the capital of the duchy of the same name. Although today it is part of the Nilfgaardian Empire, its origins, though unclear, are known to date back to much earlier times, specifically to the era of the Imperium, an ancient political entity that existed south of the Inner Sea of Gemmeria—known as the [Sea of Gales](#)—long before Nilfgaard rose to hegemonic power, or the height of the [Aen Nilfe](#) civilization.

## Vicovaro (city)



Coat of Arms of Vicovaro

### Information

TypeCity

CountryVicovaro

**Region**

South of the **Old Continent**,  
Nilfgaardian Empire

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# Architecture



Despite centuries of Nilfgaardian influence, the architecture of Vicovaro remains distinctly its own, without fully discarding the imprint left by the once-republic, now empire.

The city's streets, though somewhat disorganized due to the organic growth of the urban area, are typically wide and relatively straight, a legacy of earlier planning principles that were adapted, rather than replaced, as the city expanded.

Vicovaro's public spaces reveal this tension between structured imperial order and local organic development: plazas tend to appear where old market grounds once existed, while major avenues often curve subtly to follow the ancient terrain.

The exteriors of temples—particularly the imposing Great Temple of Ard Feannin—are richly decorated, although ornamentation is generally restricted to the columns.

These columns often feature intricate solar and floral motifs, combining classical imperial symbolism with older Vicovarian traditions.

This stands in sharp contrast to the architectural norms of Lower Alba and Nilfgaard City, where decoration tends to be confined to austere solar imagery alone and columns are deliberately left plain to evoke severity and authority.

Most buildings are constructed from Opus Caementicium Nigrum, a durable form of dark concrete that not only ensures longevity but also exhibits the deep black coloration so highly favored across the Empire.

This material choice allows homes to retain warmth during the colder months and resist erosion over time.

Although it poses challenges during the summer heat, these are cleverly mitigated through the design of large, strategically positioned windows, often shuttered with pale wood or fitted with decorative metalwork, and interior layouts specifically structured to facilitate strong, cooling air currents without causing discomfort.

Even the smallest houses are typically built with four distinct levels:

- A basement, which commonly houses the latrine, storage areas, and in wealthier homes, small private shrines or vaults.



A typical Vicovarian house architecture

- A first floor, functioning as a living and communal area, often opening into a small interior courtyard or gallery in wealthier residences.
- A second floor, usually a full sleeping chamber—except in inns, where this level may be divided into multiple smaller rooms to accommodate travelers.
- A third floor, serving as a spacious attic or loft with vaulted ceilings, often used for storage, seasonal workspaces, or even additional sleeping quarters in larger households.

The roofs across the city reflect imperial aesthetic preferences: they are predominantly subdued in color, favoring lighter muted tones such as dusty grey, faded ochre, or pale terracotta.

This stands in deliberate contrast to the dark facades of the walls below, creating a distinct visual layering characteristic of Vicovarian skylines.

Ceilings on the lower floors are often semi-curved to allow for better distribution of load and air circulation, while the uppermost floors typically feature fully vaulted ceilings, giving even modest dwellings an unexpected sense of vertical openness and grandeur.

## Etymology



The name Vicovaro most likely derives from *Bicu Variu*, an expression in the [Scholar Language](#) meaning “the home” or “place of origin of Varius.” Varius was a prominent mage of the Imperium, who, according to ancient chronicles, ascended to rule the Imperium itself shortly before its collapse.

In the Imperium’s twilight years, the city was known simply as the *City of Varius*, while the surrounding region was referred to as the *Duchy of Varius’ Origin* (*Viux Variu* in Scholar Language). Following the fall of the Imperium, both names gradually eroded and merged through the centuries, shaped by shifting dialects, new languages, local pronunciations, migratory influences, and the slow erosion of historical memory.

Another possible etymology for the name of the city of Vicovaro suggests that it may derive from the dialect of Elder Speech spoken by the Aen Nílfe, who are believed to have been the original founders of the settlement instead of the humans that made part of the Imperium. According to this hypothesis, the original name would have been *Vicodant ar Vataro* shortened thanks to the pass of time to *Vicodantvaro* and later *Vicovaro*, which can be translated as “*City of the Traveler*” or “*City of the Travelers*”. This interpretation aligns with Vicovaro’s geographical location, situated in a strategic transit area.

## Climate



The city of Vicovaro, like the rest of the duchy to which it belongs, experiences a temperate humid-dry climate. In this regard, it shares notable similarities with the temperate humid climate characteristic of Lyria and Rivia in the North. However, while summer temperatures in Lyria and Rivia typically range between 19°C and 24°C, Vicovaro tends to experience slightly warmer conditions. Summer temperatures in the city generally fluctuate between 20°C and

25°C, occasionally reaching up to 26°C depending on the year. This climatic distinction has led to Vicovaro and its surrounding region often being described as "*warm*" by many Nordling visitors.

One of the key geographic factors influencing Vicovaro's climate is its proximity to one of the major tributaries of the Alba River, which ultimately flows into the city of Nilfgaard. This riverine location contributes significantly to the moderation of summer heat, particularly during unusually warm years, acting as a natural buffer against extreme temperature peaks. As a result, the city enjoys a comfortable climate even in the height of summer. This makes Vicovaro a favored seasonal destination among residents of nearby inland regions who are disinclined to travel to coastal areas or distant locales such as the duchy of Toussaint. The city's accessible location, combined with its relatively stable and pleasant climate, has enhanced its reputation as a retreat for those seeking a temperate yet stimulating environment.

Winters in Vicovaro, though classified as cold, are generally mild and bear further resemblance to the climatic patterns of Lyria. Average winter temperatures tend to range from 10°C during the day to approximately 3°C at night. Despite these moderate figures, the combination of persistent rainfall and high humidity levels amplifies the sensation of cold, making the season feel more severe than the thermometer might suggest. Snowfall is not an uncommon occurrence, but it is relatively infrequent and, due to prevailing temperatures, rarely accumulates for long. When snow does fall, it typically melts within a short span, preventing significant buildup.

The transitional seasons—spring and autumn—are characterized by marked variability, both in terms of temperature and precipitation. These periods are often unpredictable, with sudden shifts in weather patterns being relatively common. Spring may usher in rapid thaws followed by cold snaps, while autumn can oscillate between crisp, dry days and damp, overcast spells. This seasonal fluidity contributes to the region's rich agricultural potential but also demands a certain adaptability from its inhabitants.

## Culture

Despite the effects of Nilfgaardian cultural assimilation, the people of Vicovaro are widely regarded as some of the most open and amiable within the Empire. This sets them apart from the typically reserved and austere demeanor of the "true" Nilfgaardians hailing from the Lower Alba region, where formality, stoicism, and rigid hierarchy are deeply ingrained cultural values. Vicovarians, by contrast, tend to be more expressive in both speech and gesture, displaying a warmth and hospitality that is both genuine and deeply rooted in local tradition. Conversations are animated, embraces are common—though not kisses, as in Toussaint—and generosity toward guests is considered a point of personal and communal pride. Family gatherings, shared meals, and public festivities often reflect this cultural inclination toward openness and conviviality.

Perhaps only the people of Toussaint surpass them in warmth—but unlike the Toussaintois, the Vicovarians are taken more seriously, both because of their strong connections to the imperial capital and because of their social conduct. Their friendliness, unlike the stereotypically naïve

charm of Toussaint, is rarely mistaken for gullibility. While they may enjoy a relaxed demeanor and a touch of theatrical flair in daily life, Vicovarians are also known for being astute negotiators, shrewd traders, and capable administrators when the need arises. This combination of warmth and pragmatism has earned them respect throughout the Empire, particularly in the domains of commerce and regional governance, where their ability to balance diplomacy with efficiency is often praised.

Vicovarians are also noted for their strong sense of loyalty—an attribute deeply valued in the imperial capital. This reputation has become so entrenched that a well-known Nilfgaardian proverb states: "*If you find a Vicovarian mercenary, it is no true Vicovarian.*" The phrase underscores the popular belief that those born in Vicovaro are rarely swayed by coin alone, and that their commitments—be they personal, political, or professional—tend to be sincere and enduring. Loyalty, in the Vicovarian mindset, is not merely a matter of duty, but a virtue closely tied to identity, honor, and belonging. This is reflected in their strong community bonds, and in their long-standing participation in both local and imperial institutions.

That loyalty is often accompanied by a candid and direct way of speaking, which many interpret as a mark of integrity. In the neighboring duchies of Ymlac and Rowan, Vicovarians are sometimes described—half admiringly, half critically—as being excessively honest in their dealings, occasionally to the point of bluntness. However, this straightforwardness is not typically perceived in a negative light by inhabitants of the Lower Alba region, who tend to view it as a refreshing contrast to the veiled formalities and political gamesmanship often present at the heart of the Empire. In many ways, the Vicovarian way of being has come to symbolize an ideal middle ground—rooted in tradition, yet open; proud, yet adaptable; warm, but never foolish.

Unlike Toussaint, where tradition is sacred and public festivals are both frequent and widely celebrated, Vicovaro's festive culture tends to be more reserved and private in nature. Most celebrations in the city and the rest of the duchy are held either by individuals or specific groups, rather than organized as large-scale public events. These often include family banquets, rural rites, or gatherings among members of specific professions or guilds. Only during the summer months do public festivities become more common—particularly those centered around the worship of the Great Sun. Even then, many of these gatherings are semi-public at best, with attendance often limited to family circles, civic associations, or professional guilds.

Because of this, Vicovarians have earned a reputation among the Toussaintois as being somewhat dull or austere, culturally speaking. This perception stems in part from the fact that, outside of religious observances, Vicovaro's only widely recognized public celebration is the so-called *Great Week*. While it may appear similar in structure to the *Holy Week* of the Followers of Kreve in the North, the *Great Week* is, in truth, a civil celebration—commemorating the historical vassalage of the duchy to the Nilfgaardian Empire. It is characterized by processions, theatrical reenactments, and formal declarations of allegiance, often accompanied by symbolic displays of imperial and ducal unity, especially in the city squares of Vicovaro itself.

Aside from the *Great Week* and the religious festivals dedicated to the Great Sun, the only other

notable festivities are the *New Year Celebration*, which takes place on the 21st of March (in contrast to the Nordling observance on December 31st), and the winter celebration known as the *Claiwh Journey*. The latter resembles what Nordlings refer to as *Yule*, though it shares more in common with the *Saint Klawes* visit celebrated in Toussaint—albeit stripped of its more playful or fantastical elements, and rooted instead in ancestral tales of endurance, generosity, and quiet reflection during the darkest days of the year.

As one might expect, Vicovarian fashion is heavily influenced by the styles of Lower Alba, a result of centuries of Nilfgaardian cultural assimilation.

Accordingly, black and white, along with other subdued tones, feature prominently in everyday clothing, reflecting imperial standards of elegance, sobriety, and discipline.

However, Vicovaro does not fully embrace the stark monochrome aesthetic found in the capital. While dark colors are dominant, Vicovarian attire often incorporates subtle contrasts and regional preferences. Combinations such as black with muted greens, or dark forest green with off-white or bone, are particularly common. These choices reflect both local taste and the city's climatic and material realities, especially given the warm summers that require lighter accents and breathable fabrics.

Although Vicovarian fashion avoids the flamboyant color palettes favored in Toussaint, it still allows for personal flair within a structured framework. Embroidery, fine tailoring, and ornamental fastenings—often depicting solar or floral motifs—serve as discreet ways for individuals to express status and aesthetic sensibility.

Clothing silhouettes tend to follow imperial lines: fitted doublets, long coats, layered skirts, and practical boots are the norm. However, regional artisans are known for favoring textured fabrics and asymmetrical cuts in cloaks or sashes, giving the Vicovarian look a slightly more relaxed and organic quality than its Lower Alban counterparts.

In ceremonial dress and religious festivals, golden thread and green accents are often used to honor the Great Sun, tying local tradition to imperial religion in a way that feels distinctly Vicovarian.

In autumn and winter, Vicovarian clothing aligns more closely with the imperial fashion norms of Lower Alba, favoring somber tones such as black and white. These are often paired with deep forest green or dark purple, particularly among the aristocracy, where such colors subtly convey status without overt display.

With the arrival of spring, however, the city's palette becomes more varied, though never garish. Seasonal colors such as brown, moss green, deep blue, ochre, and burnt red become more prominent. These hues reflect both the changing environment and the city's enduring appreciation for understated elegance.

Women's dresses tend to feature modest necklines with subtle curves, remaining sensuous without the bold exposure commonly seen in Toussaint or among the Nordling sorceresses.

Across genders, garments adjust in looseness and layering according to the time of year. In colder seasons, sleeves and cloaks become more fitted and insulated, while in warmer months, fabrics grow lighter and cuts become more breathable, especially around the arms and lower garments.

Skirts and coats in particular adapt fluidly with the seasons: during spring, summer, and early autumn, skirts (and robes for men of higher classes) tend to be of medium length, providing ease of movement without sacrificing decorum. Meanwhile, trousers and hose may loosen at the thigh and taper slightly at the ankle for both comfort and aesthetic flow.

## Economy



Thanks to its location near one of the tributaries of the Alba River, as well as its advantageous geographic position, the city of Vicovaro benefits significantly from the commercial activity that flows from the imperial capital. It boasts a sizeable and well-developed river port that plays a key role in its economic development, serving both as a transit point and as a redistribution hub for goods. Many merchant vessels, after completing their primary transactions in the capital, choose to navigate upriver to Vicovaro in order to sell remaining goods that did not find buyers in the imperial markets. This dynamic has contributed to Vicovaro's relatively cosmopolitan character, despite its inland location and the traditionally more insular tendencies of similar interior settlements.

As a result, the city attracts not only imperial merchants but also traders from the Northern Kingdoms, [Ofir](#), [Zerrikania](#), and, more rarely, from [Melukka](#) and even [Núchtetl](#). The comparatively low tariffs imposed on foreign goods—especially when contrasted with those levied in the imperial capital—further incentivize such visits. This steady flow of foreign traders has brought with it a variety of cultural influences, observable in Vicovaro's marketplaces, artisan quarters, and even in its culinary scene, where exotic spices and imported fabrics are commonplace. The presence of foreign enclaves and diasporas, though modest in size, contributes to the city's pluralistic identity and subtle but ongoing cultural exchange.

Nonetheless, Vicovaro is not solely dependent on riverine commerce. It is also a productive region in its own right. Its surrounding geography facilitates overland trade routes with more distant territories, such as Temeria in the North, and other imperial dominions like the duchies of Rowan and Ymlac. In fact, Vicovaro competes directly with Ymlac in the cultivation and export of mandrake root (*Mandragora officinarum*), a highly prized commodity valued both for its alchemical properties and its use in traditional medicine. The competition between the two duchies has led to the development of specialized agricultural techniques and trade networks, further strengthening Vicovaro's economic resilience.

Although not universally accepted, slavery is permitted within the duchy as a concession to imperial policy. The city hosts a small but regulated slave market that operates every Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., primarily serving regional demands. Most of the slaves traded in Vicovaro are used for agricultural labor or domestic service, and while the practice is often met with quiet disapproval among certain civic circles, it persists due to pressure from noble landowners and broader economic incentives linked to imperial trade structures.

When it comes to livestock production, the areas surrounding Vicovaro do not particularly stand out—at least not in regard to conventional domesticated animals such as cattle, sheep, or swine. These more traditional forms of animal husbandry are primarily concentrated in the capital of the neighboring duchy, Darn Rowan, which boasts more expansive pastures and a longer agrarian tradition in such practices. Vicovaro, by contrast, has developed a more specialized and regionally adapted model of animal farming that reflects both its environmental limitations and its cultural distinctiveness.

The most common livestock in the region includes domestic turkeys and rabbits, both valued for their relatively low maintenance and rapid reproduction cycles. Beekeeping is also practiced throughout the surrounding countryside, although the honey produced is generally considered of moderate quality when compared to the highly praised varieties of Ymlac, known for their floral complexity and clarity. Nevertheless, Vicovarian honey still finds a solid market within the city and nearby towns, particularly when used in cooking or local confectionery.

One of the more unusual aspects of Vicovaro's animal husbandry is its small-scale breeding of domesticated silver foxes, prized primarily for their fur. These foxes, often raised in controlled enclosures on the outskirts of the city, contribute to the local textile and luxury goods industries. Their pelts, while not as valuable as those imported from the harsher northern climes, are still sought after for cloaks, linings, and ornamental trim, especially by the growing middle class within the empire.

Perhaps most emblematic of Vicovaro's alternative approach to livestock is the presence of a unique species: the short-haired llama (*Lama calidus domestica*). This breed, descended from wild mountain llamas found in the nearby Tir Tochair range, has been gradually domesticated and selectively bred to thrive in the more temperate lowlands surrounding the city. Unlike their highland ancestors, these llamas possess a more docile temperament, shorter fleece better suited to the local climate, and are frequently used as pack animals in both rural and semi-urban areas. Their wool, while not as fine as that of Ymlacian sheep, is durable and well-suited to utilitarian textiles such as tunics, cloaks, and travel gear. Additionally, llama dung is commonly used as fertilizer in local farms.

In addition to mandrake, Vicovaro's climate supports the cultivation of fingered citron (*Citrus medica* var. *sarcodactylis*), cherimoya (*Annona cherimola*), and persimmon (*Diospyros kaki*), all well-suited to its temperate humid-dry environment. These fruits are exported in small quantities as luxury goods to wealthier regions of the empire, while forming a staple of the local diet. Beyond fruit production, the outskirts of the city are lined with extensive wheat fields and olive groves. Olive oil—considered a luxury in the North, where sunflower oil is more commonly consumed—is a relatively affordable and widespread product in the South, with Vicovaro being a notable contributor to its regional supply. Some noble households in the imperial capital are known to specifically request Vicovarian olive oil for its smoother texture and slightly sweet aftertaste.

The surrounding countryside is also known for its viticultural activity, particularly the production of mosto (freshly pressed grape juice) and Vicovarian wine. The latter is a semidry, multivarietal wine distinguished by its striking green hue. While it does not rival the prestigious

vintages of Toussaint in terms of refinement or renown, it nonetheless contributes to the region's economic diversification and enjoys popularity among the urban middle classes and visiting merchants.

Furthermore, the city's geographical setting enables the exploitation of freshwater resources. Local fisheries specialize in species such as *Sparisoma dulcis* (commonly referred to as Vicovarian parrotfish), as well as members of the *Vieja* and *Salmo* genera. These fish form an essential part of both the local diet and the city's commercial exports, with dried and salted variants reaching markets as far as Vengerberg and Gors Velen. Fishing guilds, well-organized and politically influential within the city, regulate seasonal catches to prevent overfishing and maintain ecological balance, reinforcing Vicovaro's reputation as a diverse and self-sustaining economic hub. Their guild halls, located near the docks, serve not only as administrative centers but also as spaces for negotiation between merchants, nobility, and local authorities.

## Demographics

Vicovaro boasts a population of approximately 190,000 inhabitants, occasionally reaching as high as 200,000 during periods of seasonal influx and temporary residency. This makes it not only the most populous city in its duchy but also one of the largest urban centers in the southern provinces of the Empire. The duchy's two other major cities—Bittervoo and Tyvlyn—maintain populations of roughly 130,000 and 100,000 respectively, reflecting a relatively high degree of urbanization for the duchy.

Of Vicovaro's population, an estimated 93% identify as native Vicovarians, while the remaining 7% consists of individuals from other regions and nationalities, including Nordlings, Oferi, Zerrikanians, and occasional traders or scholars from farther lands. This modest yet steady foreign presence contributes to the city's cosmopolitan atmosphere, particularly in commercial and academic districts.

## Examples of Vicovarian names

### Males names:

*Adawor, Adelchy, Aemar, Aillil, Aiúlwf, Alfym, Aloryn, Aroc, Bácr, Batëre, Bîm, Blasím, Bleddyn, Bonamr, Branys, Brecas, Cahir, Caldor, Calveir, Callym, Ceallach, Dheran, Dhaevan, Dhomir, Dmúrdo, Durc, Durcio, Egrion, Elvas, Enot, Eÿsh, Faustyr, Fenric, Ferram, Flour, Flourens, Flourem, Galdwyn, Gruffyd, Guiley, Gweiron, Haldran, Helarioch, Ilven, Iscam, Ivarn, Jacohir, Jarwoen, Jhoarn, Kaelun, Kaevic, Konsol, Leontan, Loffir, Lorwyn, Lywelyn, Maeric, Malkor, Manem, Mertak, Naevor, Nemyr, Nhurm, Nikom, Nikoy, Offr, Odran, Owher, Ostreyn, Pelvar, Philar, Phreir, Qomow, Quenric, Rhaemund, Rizarn, Rovach, Solvar, Sylvien, Taevor, Taliesin, Techalmy, Theur, Torwyn, Tywerch, Ugol, Ullian, Vaelan, Vayoc, Veymir, Volturhe, Wyrran, Xoc, Xystor, Ygron, Yllair, Zalkir, Zane, Zerzyro*

### Female names:

*Abantza, Adirane, Agate, Ainhua, Aintza, Alayka, Alazne, Alice, Alypia, Alyz, Annyna, Arellya, Artyn, Artyndra, Ayntza, Azzurra, Bakea, Baudea, Belyra, Callisse, Cixyl, Clotyld, Codlye,*

*Daelyne, Davymnie, Dyana, Eische, Eische, Eych, Eysh, Eyshé, Etta, Euzhara, Felyna, Fyorella, Garay, Genavie, Gurme, Gyanna, Gynevve, Helyne, Ippoly, Irayka, Iztya, Jorynne, Juenme, Kaurella, Lukene, Lysanne, Maëza, Maitane, Mara, Maryell, Melissa, Mycolle, Nagore, Natlory, Nerith, Nora, Nycola, Onyre, Paula, Paule, Pylarie, Pymna, Quenyssa, Raffyella, Rhowen, Sarabe, Siua, Syvella, Talerra, Thalya, Udae, Uxue, Vanessa, Viviam, Vystella, Xareya, Ybamn, Yelle, Yzam, Zavaly, Zohardella, Zyraia*

## Surnames:

Most Vicovarian surnames, due to Nilfgaardian influence, are typically preceded by "**var**" (meaning of the *house/family of*) or "**aep**" (meaning *son/daughter of*). In some cases, the prefix "**myec**" (*descendant of*) is also used, particularly in more formal contexts.

- **For example:** Taliesin Bleddyn Yorath aep Lywelyn (*Taliesin Bleddyn Yorath, son of Lywelyn*).

*Abair, Accard, Agreiter, Alkor, Almher, Appel, Arbor, Arthom, Aybar, Bardein, Berre, Blausch, Brecand, Buenech, Caltros, Charvy, Corvenn, Cronjh, Cullaz, Darrieussecq, Delvran, Derwaz, Echaz, Elord, Elorz, Erravin, Evem, Fohr, Fycham, Galls, Gamarr, Gašhot, Gattaz, Gurrut, Heym, Ilyash, Iyahr, Kaenric, Koven, Loreyth, Mendyw, Mermoz, Metax, Mézec, Mhok, Nahard, Nayssir, Nymec, Okanp, Olear, Ökh, Pheab, Praz, Qyovam, Relyc, Rhyoyq, Rossyr, Saelvar, Selque, Serwen, Tarant, Teresh, Terheyv, Thâr v, Trebraz, Trefvhir, Ughalet, Uxol, Valderik, Varnasse, Verucay, Vlok, Vosker, Whoerd, Wyk, Xhem, Yorath, Zevrahn, Zhuric, Zyend*

## Geography

The geography surrounding the city of Vicovaro is predominantly undulating, marked by gentle rises and soft depressions. There are no significant elevated landforms in the immediate vicinity, with the terrain remaining relatively smooth until one reaches the Tir Tochair Mountains further afield. The city itself is built upon ten low-lying hills, whose modest elevation contributes to its characteristic topography without presenting any major geographical barriers. This softly rolling landscape not only facilitates urban development but also offers scenic vistas of the surrounding countryside.

Due to its geographical position, the city of Vicovaro lies approximately two days on horseback from the borders of the cantons of Val Dorchenn, Hyant, and Argentar. These, together with the canton that bears the city's name, divide the duchy into four administrative regions. It is located four days from the village of Riyet, and six days from the city of Bittervo—the second most important city in the duchy.

A full week's ride leads to the fortress of [Burov Mylne](#), home to the witchers who established Vicovaro as the seat of their order: the [School of the Fox](#). This distance also marks the location of the village of Anyen, the closest settlement to the Tir Tochair mountains. Finally, the city is two weeks away from Tyvlyn, the third most important city of the duchy, which borders the neighboring duchy of Ymlac.

## Early history (1200s B.R - 1150s A.R)

Vicovaro has never been a stranger to great empires. In fact, if we examine the etymology of its name, and consider both of its proposed origins as plausible, it is highly likely that Vicovaro was originally founded as an Aen Nílfé (commonly, though inaccurately, referred to by the Nordlings as “*Black Seidhe*”) settlement.

It may have first served as an elven outpost, which gradually developed into a city due to its strategic geographic location. If this theory holds true, Vicovaro would have remained under Aen Nílfé dominion for centuries—until the arrival of humans in 230 B.R. (Before the Resurrection) (not to be confused with the arrival of the Nordling humans, which occurred much later, around the 760s A.R., After the Resurrection).

This would explain why the human tribes of Lower Alba, who would later intermix with the Aen Nílfé to become the Nilfgaardians, were influenced by the early cultural and technological achievements of Vicovaro.

Alternatively, following the second etymological hypothesis, it is also likely that, after the arrival of humans, a branch of them founded the Imperium (not to be mistaken for the Nilfgaardian Empire). This ancient human civilization is thought to have expanded southward, from what is modern-day southern Gemmeria to the region that would become Vicovaro, absorbing numerous tribes along the way.

This theory not only explains a different possible origin of the city's name, but also provides a compelling rationale for the presence of the Scholar's Tongue (*Schola linguarum*) and Northern Common in Vicovaro and surrounding countries. It is probable that the Imperium's language, acting as a lingua franca for centuries among human populations, heavily influenced the creole evolution of the Northern Common, which later spread both in the North and the South as the Nordlings expanded.

Hence, the enduring use of Scholar's Tongue in diplomatic, academic, and magical circles across the Northern Kingdoms and Nilfgaard may be traced back to this shared linguistic heritage.

The precise duration of elven control over Vicovaro is unknown, but if the city was indeed founded by the Aen Nílfé in the 1200s B.R., their rule may have lasted until 30 A.R., a year which—if we consider only human control—could also be regarded as Vicovaro's “official” founding under the Imperium.

From 30 A.R. to the 790s A.R., the city would have remained part of the Imperium. The collapse of this human empire around the 790s coincided with the arrival and expansion of the Nordlings, who had been present on the Old Continent for some thirty years by that point.

Following the fall of the Imperium, Vicovaro became an independent duchy, a status it retained

for nearly four centuries. During this period, it absorbed not only refugees and cultural remnants of the Imperium, but also an increasing number of Nordling settlers who had begun pushing into southern Gemmera and beyond.

This era of independence lasted until the 1150s A.R., when, fearing the might of a rising Nilfgaardian power—and recalling the brutal fate of recently conquered Etolia—the Vicovarian nobility voluntarily submitted to imperial authority, becoming the first vassal state of the Nilfgaardian Empire.

Interestingly, the Nilfgaardians themselves were partly inspired by the legacy of the old Imperium, from which they borrowed not only a centralized governmental structure, but also titles—such as *Imperator*—instead of native Nilfgaardian terms like *Ker'zaer*.

## Vicovaro joins the Nilfgaardian Empire (1150s A.R)

In the latter half of the 12th century, the then-independent Duchy of Vicovaro became the target of imperial ambitions. Torres var Emreis, grandfather of the future Emperor Emhyr var Emreis, launched a military campaign to subjugate the duchy, emboldened by his recent success in the conquest of Etolia.

Despite achieving a series of pyrrhic victories, Torres' forces ultimately failed to capture the capital city itself. The attempted siege of Vicovaro was thwarted by the city's formidable walls and determined defense. Facing high casualties and a defensive stalemate, the imperial army was forced to retreat.

In the aftermath of the failed invasion, the noble families of Vicovaro convened in urgent council with their ruling duke. The memory of Etolia's conquest was still fresh, and the threat of a second, more devastating campaign loomed large. After long and intense deliberations, the nobility persuaded the duke to capitulate voluntarily—not out of defeat, but as a strategic measure to preserve lives and safeguard the duchy's future.

The proposal was bold: to petition for integration into the Nilfgaardian Empire willingly, under favorable terms, rather than face eventual ruin through renewed war. Surprisingly, the Nilfgaardian court—recognizing the strategic and symbolic value of such a submission—accepted the offer.

Thus, Vicovaro became a rare anomaly within the empire: a duchy that joined without conquest, retaining a remarkably high degree of autonomy. Unlike other territories, it was never reorganized into a province, instead becoming the first official vassal state under the Nilfgaardian banner.

This pivotal moment in Vicovarian history is commemorated annually in the celebration known as the Great Week. The name stems from the seven days of debate and negotiation during which the nobles and duke weighed their options—ultimately choosing diplomacy over destruction, and autonomy over pride.

## The Vicovarian Plague of 1328 - 1330 A.R

In 1328, Emperor Jan Calveit I founded what would later become the renowned Vicovarian Medical Academy.

Ironically, in the very same year that the institution was constructed and opened, the city was struck by an outbreak of hepatitis B, which would plague Vicovaro for nearly two years.

This unforeseen crisis provided the first generation of Vicovarian medical students with an intense and immediate baptism of fire, granting them invaluable practical experience from their very first year of study.

Many of the academy's students—along with the seasoned medics who had been brought in to serve as professors—found themselves thrust into frontline roles, forced to battle the epidemic directly due to the severe shortage of available medical personnel caused by the plague.

Their exemplary response to the outbreak, marked by resilience, improvisation, and a remarkable commitment to public health, earned the admiration and lasting gratitude of the citizens of Vicovaro.

From that point onward—the *brief interruption caused by the Vicovarian Puppet Conspiracy notwithstanding*—the people of the city would take great pride in the young minds educated within the walls of their academy, viewing them not only as future medics but as vital defenders of the capital and, to an extent, of the duchy's overall well-being.

## Language

The primary language spoken in the city of Vicovaro is Nilfgaardian—more specifically, the Vicovarian variety, as one would expect. While closely related to the standard dialect spoken in the imperial capital due to geographical proximity, the Vicovarian dialect exhibits several subtle yet distinctive features that warrant its classification as a separate regional form. Among these are notable phonetic shifts, such as the pronunciation of *w* as *wr*, and *v* as *b*, creating a particular cadence and rhythm that immediately identifies native speakers. Lexical differences also set the dialect apart, with unique vocabulary that has developed through centuries of localized usage and cultural evolution. Two prominent examples include *burov* (meaning "hole") in place of the standard *gat*, and *mylne* ("fox") instead of the imperial *creban*.

The Vicovarian dialect is widely spoken across all social strata, though slight differences in intonation and word choice can still be observed between rural and urban speakers, as well as between the educated elite and the working class.

Northern Common, on the other hand, remains in circulation, though its function is now largely utilitarian. It is used primarily as a language of commerce, particularly in dealings with traders from the Northern Kingdoms or among mercenaries, scholars, and diplomats operating in multi-regional contexts. Once far more widespread across southern territories, its prominence has gradually diminished due to the expansive reach of Nilfgaardian political, military, and cultural hegemony. As the empire consolidated control over formerly independent or semi-autonomous regions, Nilfgaardian became the default administrative and educational

language, relegating Northern Common to a secondary role.

Nevertheless, a working knowledge of Northern Common is still considered a mark of education and refinement among Vicovaro's upper classes. Nobles, wealthy merchants, and court officials are generally expected to speak it fluently or at least possess a functional command, especially if they are involved in interregional trade, diplomacy, or travel beyond the empire's borders. In some households, children are even tutored in both Nilfgaardian and Northern Common from an early age, a practice that underscores the lingering prestige of the latter language, despite its reduced official role.

## Non-Human Presence in Vicovaro

From time immemorial—assuming both proposed origins of the city are considered plausible—Vicovaro has hosted non-human populations. The status of these communities has fluctuated over the centuries, yet since the fall of the Imperium, their treatment in Vicovaro has generally been more favorable than in most Northern territories.

The first known non-human inhabitants, aside from the possibly elven founders of the city, were enslaved naiads from the city of Irin. These beings were captured by a mercenary group known—rather unimaginatively—as the *“Naiad Hunters.”* The captives were sold not only in Irin itself, where they were displayed in bourgeois aquariums as exotic pets, but also in cities like Vicovaro, where a similar market flourished.

However, the first free non-humans to settle and integrate into Vicovarian society were gnomes, most of them traders from the Tir Tochair mountains. These gnomes would soon become instrumental figures in the technological advancement of both the duchy and its capital, especially through their expertise in metallurgy and engineering.

Notably, gnomish influence played a key role in the development of Vicovarian sword-making, which remains a hallmark of the region's craftsmanship. It was in large part thanks to these innovations that Vicovaro was able to resist the attempted invasion by Emperor Torres var Emreis.

Indeed, long before Novigrad became known for its technological endeavors, Vicovaro had already established a Gnomish Invention Factory, which became one of the city's proudest institutions for a long time.

Following the arrival of the gnomes, smaller populations of dwarves also began to settle in the city, attracted by the growing trade opportunities and the relative tolerance shown toward non-humans compared to the Northern Kingdoms.

## Notable Inhabitants

- Abantza myec Abair
- **Adalwulf of Aedirn**
- Aillil aep Ceallach

- [Assire var Anahid](#)
- [Ceallach aep Gruffyd](#)
- [Cahir Mawr Dyffryn aep Ceallach](#)
- [Condwiramurs Tilly](#)
- [Dheran aep Ceallach](#)
- [Eishe of Vicovaro](#)
- [Enya var Pitch](#) (From the early to mid-14th century)
- [Flourens Delannoy](#)
- [Putnam Pitch](#) (From the early to mid-14th century)
- [Taliesin Bleddyn Yorath aep Lywelyn](#)

## Notable Locations

- [Ard lleuad Cemetery](#)
- [Ducal Palace](#)
- [Great Temple of Ard Feannin](#)
- [General Hospital of Vicovaro](#)
- [Gweison Haul](#)
- [Vicovarian Gnomish Invention Factory](#)
- [Vicovaro Medical Academy](#)
- [Vicovaro University](#)

## Religion

Since the [March 8th Edict](#) issued by Emperor Torres var Emreis in the 12th century—which established the Cult of the Great Sun as the official religion of the Empire and the patron of House var Emreis—it has remained the sole officially sanctioned religion throughout imperial territory. The decree not only elevated the Great Sun to a position of spiritual dominance but also led to the systematic dismantling of all other organized religious institutions.

As a result, the only temples that can be found openly within the city of Vicovaro belong to the imperial faith. Some pre-Great Sun religious traditions, such as the cult of Aminth, survive in syncretised or symbolic forms, often reinterpreted through the lens of Great Sun theology to avoid direct persecution. Traces of these ancient practices are sometimes visible in folk rituals, seasonal customs, or in the iconography of older noble houses.

Although Vicovarians are generally tolerant of different beliefs, they are also famously law-abiding, and thus do not allow alternative religious practices to be conducted in public. However, this does not mean that the local authorities always enforce imperial policy with full rigidity. In practice, they frequently turn a blind eye to the quiet persistence of non-sanctioned faiths—especially when these clandestine groups operate discreetly through disguised temples or sanctuaries that pay an unofficial "tax" to the ducal treasury in exchange for continued tolerance.

Though relatively few in number, these secret places of worship have endured for generations, having quietly survived since the time the edict came into effect. Most adherents of non-imperial religions, however, prefer to practice their faith in private, tending to modest

household shrines hidden from public view. Such personal expressions of belief are quietly accepted by the general population, as Vicovarians—unlike the Toussaintois—are not known for gossip or meddling in the affairs of their neighbors.

Perhaps the greatest source of quiet discontent among Vicovarians is not the presence of forbidden cults, but rather the imperial endorsement of certain sects within the Cult of the Great Sun itself. These groups, though considered "legitimate" by the High Temple in Nilfgaard proper, are often viewed with suspicion and unease in Vicovaro. Movements such as the Illuminated Sun, the Radiants, and the Order of the Morning Sun are seen by many locals as dangerously zealous, disruptive to tradition, or even doctrinally unsound. Their flamboyant ceremonies and missionary fervor clash with the more measured and ceremonial style of Vicovarian worship, and while the ducal authorities tolerate them out of duty, few Vicovarians truly welcome their presence.

## Structure

The city of Vicovaro is organized around the semi-quadrangular shape formed by its concentric walls. It is referred to as a semi-square rather than a full square due to the absence of fortifications along the riverside port, where the natural barrier of the water, along with imperial infrastructure, is deemed sufficient for defense.

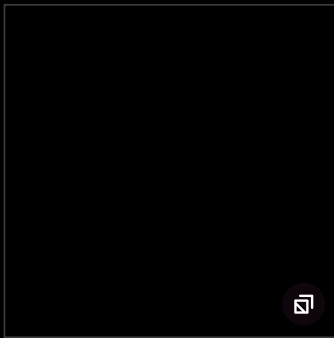
The city comprises three distinct walls: the Old Wall, the Middle Wall, and the New Wall. Each defines a layer of historical and functional development. Within the Old Wall lie the oldest and most prestigious institutions, including the Ducal Palace and several ancestral noble estates. The Middle Wall, built during the city's period of rapid expansion, houses important civic and scholarly buildings, such as the Gweison Haul Academy of Magic. The New Wall encompasses the most recent additions to the city, including the Vicovaro Medical Academy—founded by Emperor Jan Calveit in 1328—and the second of the city's two main prisons.

Reflecting this tripartite structure, the city maintains three branches of the Ducal Guard: the Old Guard, the Veteran Guard, and the New Guard. These divisions are not only geographical but generational as well. The Old Guard, composed primarily of seasoned officers and retirees from higher command, patrols the district within the Old Wall. The Veteran Guard, made up of mid-career soldiers and career professionals, oversees the Middle Wall zone, while the New Guard, composed of younger recruits and newer appointees, is responsible for maintaining order in the outermost districts.

Outside the walls but within short walking distance lie both the cemetery of Ard Illeuad (*Nilfgaardian: The Great Moon*) and the municipal landfill—two necessary spaces placed deliberately beyond the city's formal boundaries.

The city also possesses a complex sewage system—one of the most advanced in the southern provinces of the Empire. It channels wastewater and runoff through an underground network that ultimately discharges beneath the riverside port.

## Gallery



The Ard Illeuad Cemetery during sunset

## Image Credits



- *Coat of Arms of Vicovaro* by Mechemik.

## Trivia



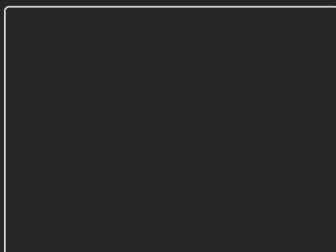
- For the Nilfgaardian alphabet, the **Theban alphabet** has been used. Thus, creating a notorious difference between the Nordling alphabet (which uses the Glagolitic alphabet) and the Imperial alphabet.
- Ard Illeuad translate to "Great Moon" in Nilfgaardian.

## Categories



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